



North East Forest Alliance

MEDIA RELEASE

NORTH EAST FOREST ALLIANCE

Environment Minister Upton faces International Day of Forest protest over government failure on forest protections

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Environmentalists, wildlife carers and animal protection activists will be congregating outside the Double Bay electorate office of the beleaguered Minister for the Environment, Gabrielle Upton on the International Day of Forests, Wednesday at 12 noon on the 21st of March to demand that the Berejiklian Government reverse gear on its path of environmental devastation. The protest has been organised by the Animal Justice Party and co-hosted with the North East Forest Alliance (NEFA)

"The NSW and Commonwealth Governments are hell bent on rolling over the Regional Forest Agreements (RFA) which have been a comprehensive failure and must not be extended for another 20 years" said Dailan Pugh, spokesperson for NEFA.

"The Berejiklian Government is under pressure to fulfil unsustainable Government logging contracts, with the number of big trees left in forests plummeting on both private and public land as logging intensity is increased and environmental protections are systematically dismantled. NSW taxpayers have already had to pay 13 million dollars in compensation to loggers for timber that never existed"

"Koala populations have crashed by 50% on the north coast of NSW over the past 20 years, they are unlikely to survive the next 20 years unless there is a total change of direction. There is a tragedy unfolding for our wildlife, with the collapse of Koala populations across both public and private lands just one consequence of the accelerating degradation and fragmentation of native forests" said Mr. Pugh.

Unchecked urban development is also taking its toll on wildlife habitat. In Campbelltown there are major concerns about the annihilation of a healthy koala colony as a result of tree clearing for a new housing development and road widening. Founder of Save the Wildlife and Bushlands in Campbelltown., Ricardo Lonza will be attending the Upton protest; "We are lucky to have the only known disease free koalas in Campbelltown and we need to wake up the governments and councils to start protecting this unique beautiful disease free colony of koalas before it's too late. Over development is destroying wildlife corridors and wiping out koala habitat in the Macarthur region leaving koalas and other wildlife wandering the suburban streets trying to get from A to B, putting them in danger of being killed by cars and dog attacks.'

"The challenges to our forests are endless. If urban development and logging weren't already putting extreme pressure on our remaining forests, then the government's promotion of biomass electricity generation, otherwise known as shredding trees and feeding them into wood-fired power stations. They claim this will be renewable energy but it will actually release more greenhouse gases than coal!"

“If we want forests for the future, if we want our unique plants and animals to survive in the wild we need to look after our forests. If Minister Upton fails to heed the message, then she will need to prepare the government for a “Lock the Gate” scale of protests in the lead up to the 2019 state election. “said protest organiser, Angela Pollard.

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